428 to change his mind. If, however, he absolutely refuses to heed their protests, they will not make an issue of it, but when the time comes to [262] apportion the estate, the testamentary arrangement to disinherit the heir presumptive will simply be declared null and void.

If the heir presumptive was disinherited for any of the causes for disqualification listed above or because he had committed adultery with one of his father's wives or a wife of someone in the family, the estate is given to the next in the line of succession as determined by Moaga custom.

Right to make a will. All who own property may make wills.

Revocation of wills. Wills may be revoked if the testator so desires. He has only to make a simple oral declaration of changed intention in the same manner as that described above.

Chapter 18

Circumcision. Do the Mossi Practice It?

304 184 Circumcision is highly esteemed among the Mossi. Some colonial officials, because of their ignorance of Mossi customs, have claimed that neither circumcision nor excision was practiced. One must be able, indeed, to distinguish between the Moaga, the Boussanga, and especially the Nionioga. Although the three groups are related, they have different customs.

304 Circumcision, which is done according to precise rules, is carried out here in virtually the same way as it is among the Kassonké of Kayes.

304 626 The ceremony must originally have been imposed on the Dagomba (of whom the Mossi are descendants) by Islam. Now, however, young men seek to have themselves circumcised, not for any religious reason, but rather to avoid the ridicule of their friends and, especially, the scorn shown by Mossi women for any uncircumcised man.

304 We shall attempt to describe below the circumcision ceremony among the Mossi.

After the harvest, toward the end of November, the young men state their wish to be circimcised. Since the cost of supporting

314 The Nioniossé and the Soukoaba do not practice circumcision,
184 and that is why they are called Mossé. In villages inhabited solely by Nioniossé, a kéogo may not be set up. At present some boys of Nionioga origin ignore the prohibition and go to their mother's village (Yastenga) to have the purifying operation (1).

[775] 1. Apparently the Moslems believe that those who are circumcised will not go to hell.

304 Among the Mossi many Christians voluntarily have themselves
832 circumcised; women -- even Christians -- feel a certain repug-
626 nance for the touch of the "Moaga."

Finally, excision is also esteemed among the Mossi, except among the Nioniossé who do not practice it. Girls who are not excised are scorned by their friends and will have no lovers.

241 picking, the plant may be turned under and left to enrich the soil.

241 Apart from the co-operative cultivation of fields under the proprietorship of the lineage elder, each farmer works for himself. He aids his
476 relatives, and they in turn assist him with his work, but the results of their communal effort are not shared. This applies not only to the work of planting but also to cultivation and harvest. The decision about what is to be planted in a particular field and how it shall be cultivated rests finally with the individual farmer.

Communal or co-operative effort is much more characteristic of the work of cultivation than of the planting period, when everyone is in a hurry to get his own seeds into the ground and requests for assistance are not welcomed. A strong note of competition is evident at this time. A [461] man takes pride in his efficiency as a farmer, and there is a race to see who can get farthest along with his work. In the earliest phase of prepa- [572] rations for the approaching rainy season it is the individual's best friend upon whom he relies most for assistance. He is the first person to be called on for assistance in clearing the field for planting. If a Mossi farmer is unmarried, he may also ask the other unmarried men of his lineage for help. If a long day must be spent in the field in order to clear and clean it properly, his mother will offer the helpers the midday meal, which is carried out to them as they work.

622 *Naba koba* (chief's cultivation) is the name given to the work which the
651 villagers do in the fields belonging to the village chief. A village elder is
241 charged with announcing when and where work in the chief's fields is to be done, and each lineage head relays the news to his kinsmen. This contribution of labor is no longer obligatory, as it was formerly, but only
● [626] a question of social pressure and recognition that individual well-being and the welfare of the village "depend on the chief."

241 Every Mossi is an agriculturist. Although agriculture is the principal
463 source of income, everyone also engages in crafts, particularly during the dry season when the work in the fields is finished. However, there are no full-time crafts specialists. Even the African functionaries in the European administration and the teachers, clerks, and merchants all work in their fields part of the time during the rainy season. The activities of the blacksmiths, leather workers, butchers, wood workers, herbalists, and small merchants are carried out on a much smaller scale and are fitted into the routine established by the rains and the growth of their millet. Only elders whose age keeps them from the fields might be thought of as specialists who do not participate in agriculture, but their land is worked by younger members of the family, and they take a keen interest in the course of its cultivation. The village chief, the earth custodian, and certain other elderly and important members of the community do not cultivate; this is because of their position and age rather than because

583 591 couscous, which he offers to the relatives. Then he takes the girl away. He asks a neighbor for a hut to harbor the young couple on their wedding night and over the next few weeks. They stay there for only a month or two, until their soukala is built.

583 The bride price actually varies from region to region among the Mossi. We have just seen it range from 2,000 to 50,000 cowries. Earlier, we saw it set at 25,000. At Kombisiguiri it amounts to a mere 1,000. The young man's father visits the young girl's father with a chicken and 500 cowries; then he comes to see him a second time, again with a chicken and 500 cowries. There is no other bride price. Those who do not have a chicken to offer replace it with a bundle of firewood or a straw séko. In short, a girl here is worth 30 sous (the two chickens being worth 0.50 franc between them, and the 1,000 cowries amounting to one franc).

591 [431] Among rich people the young couple may remain seven, nine, or even twelve months in their neighbors' house. They present the latter with gifts, and during this period of time they proceed to build a soukala, or rather to have one built. The young man's father helps his son in this undertaking.

593 431 626 The young husband, now settled on his own, will henceforth work on his own account. He has become in turn the head of a soukala, but if he obtains a lot of millet or other grain he offers gifts to his father. If he becomes wealthy and makes no such gifts, the neighbors will insult him. He always makes gifts, therefore, for fear of being insulted. A son who marries, as a rule, builds his soukala as near as possible to that of his father.

593 Finally, let us add that the father usually buys his son's kitchen utensils when the boy settles on his own.

428 593 3. When the head of a family dies, the younger brother inevitably takes command of the family, but all the property, whatever its nature, goes to the children of the deceased and more especially to his oldest son. There is no longer any family real estate or movable property, or else nothing is regarded as such any longer.

/550/ The eldest son takes his father's soukala and everything that goes with it, fields, slaves, livestock, father's wives. He shares them, however, with his brothers and even with his sisters.

582 the household a more serious and more binding affair among the
836 Bambara than in this particular region. /241/

Vadier says on the subject, "The fact that a young girl has had relations with a native other than her husband prior to marriage is by no means an impediment to the marriage.

"Many betrothed girls have lovers. It even happens quite frequently that their fathers are forced to go in search of them at the homes of the young men with whom they have run away. Actually, this matter is of no concern to the husband. As long as he gets the woman, the rest matters little to him. It is not unusual for a girl to bring a child [848] which she had by another man into her husband's home. This child eventually returns to its natural father."

582 This picture is painted in rather bleak colors. In reality, fathers
836 and mothers do try, as best they can, to prevent their daughters from
585 taking lovers. They do not like to see them go to the "tom-tom,"
626 but they can scarcely keep them from going, and often the "tom-tom,"
684 like our own country dances, plays havoc with a young girl's virtue. If the girl says nothing, everything goes well. Since among the Mossi there is no exhibition of the skirt cloth following the consummation of the marriage, there is no evidence. Even if the husband knows ahead of time or finds out at the last moment, he says nothing out of shame, to avoid being scorned. When the father leads his daughter to the hut of the ancestors before sending her to her fiancé, however, she often does not dare enter the hut. Having lost her virginity and fearing that she might be killed by the ancestors, she admits her wrongdoing to her father. Sometimes she may have the courage or the effrontery to enter the ancestral hut, but later, if she falls ill in her husband's hut, she will interpret her condition as the ancestors' vengeance for the sort of moral perjury she committed by entering their hut in a state of transgression, and she will confess to her husband what she has done. In both cases the lover is confronted, in the first instance by the father, in the second by the husband, and a goat, two canari of dolo, and a chicken are demanded from him. A sacrifice will be offered to the ancestors with these various items to ask their forgiveness, they will pardon the wife and the lover, and order will be restored.

848 Sometimes, as mentioned earlier, a child is the fruit of a girl's passion. The lover having made reparation and the ancestors being satisfied, the husband will accept the child along with the girl, but

8: Skinner E-5 (1955-1957) 1958
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how important is the conversion of the chiefs, or, at least, their sympathy for our religion, in the spread of Catholicism." The missionaries may have been successful in the village of the Manga district chief because he was sympathetic to them, but they made few converts in the villages far from the district center or in the neighboring districts. In the Béré district, a few miles from Manga, the Catholics have made only 22 converts despite more than 15 years' work. In Manga, however, they were able to "recruit" most of the young children for their church and school. When an old man was asked why his children became Catholic, he tried to evade the question but finally replied that he did not control the minds of his children. Knowing the nature of administrative practice in the upper Volta before 1946, and the nature of Mossi family structure, we looked further for the answer.

Paradoxically, it comes from a Catholic missionary, André Dupont, who, seeking to discover the reason for the decrease of patients in the Catholic-controlled maternity clinics, asked:

> Why have the maternity clinics which in 1942 served more than seventy mothers a month now serve only two or three? "We are no longer forced to go," reply the villagers. Was it the fear of sanction which accounted for the unanimous use of the clinics? Alas! It would seem to be so. The use of force and sanction have rendered odious an institution of charity. It would have been better if the mothers were only encouraged to use the clinics. "These natives do not understand," I am told sometimes. But how does one expect them to understand? (Dupont 1949:4)

Fear was certainly one of the reasons why the people in Manga embraced Catholicism. Before 1946 (the Brazzaville conference in 1944 abolished forced labor), men and women were recruited for work on the roads and on Ivory Coast plantations, and children were recruited for the schools. The district chiefs often gathered orphans and the children of their former serfs and sent them to the mission to fill the quotas, but many children and whole families voluntarily attached themselves to the missions. The reasons for so doing are legion, but in some cases it was simply the desire to accept the new religious faith.

Once at the mission the children were taught French and the tenets of Catholicism. Many of the boys later became catechists or priests and several girls went into the nunnery. However, the largest group of educated youths became the clerical personnel of the administration and were lost to missionary activity. Because the administration lacked French-speaking Mossi, the young people received good jobs. This desertion to the administration has become so serious that the missionaries at Manga have ceased to teach French to their catechists and now use the vernacular.

Conversion to Catholicism, bringing with it the knowledge of French, was formerly one of the sure roads to upward social mobility. Most Catholic teachers at Manga (and at Nobéré) are individuals who were recruited as unwilling school-boys but today are the highest paid members of their lineages. Other gains have accrued to persons who become Catholics. For example, the people at Manga believe that the missionaries used their influence with the

11: Skinner E-5 (1955-1957) 1964
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difficulty discharging these duties, for, nobles aside, the Mossi usually obeyed orders from their chiefs—a fact verified by most observers. At the same time, a district chief had to be temperate in his demands upon his villagers, and could not take advantage of his obligations to the Mogho Naba as a means of personal enrichment. Similarly, the district administrators could not seek personal gain either by augmenting the demands of the district chief or by withholding part of the goods and services rendered to him. District administrators who were found guilty of maladministration or embezzlement were executed, because activities of this kind could—and often did—jeopardize the life of the district chief.

The Mossi might complain among themselves about the administrative policies of their district chief, but they took no measures against him unless he was very cruel or exploitative. A district chief who by his disregard for the people's welfare was believed to have lost the ability to "command people" jeopardized not only his position but also his life. When the people were dissatisfied with a chief, they either boycotted him or deserted their villages and migrated to another district, thus "increasing the force" (nam) of the chief who gave them sanctuary. This placed the deserted chief in a rather difficult position. Mogho Naamse are known to have ordered the execution of district chiefs and even autonomous Dimdamba who had lost their subjects through their own fault. In 1863, when Mogho Naba Sanum was informed that the ruler of Boussouma, Naba Zande, had been chased away by his subjects for administrative abuses and had fled to a Ouagadougou village, he had him captured and executed.[39] Thus, the threat that people might leave the district was often strong enough to ensure a just administration, because the district chiefs and officials depended upon the villagers not only for the economic support of the central administration but also for their livelihood and their lives.

Those district chiefs who supervised other district chiefs for the Mogho Naba did not interfere with the internal administration of the districts. The chiefs of the Vooko and Nobila districts, for instance, had administrators of their own to look after their villages. But they were responsible to the chief of Nobere district, not their respective provincial ministers, for their internal affairs. Moreover, they had to follow the Nobere chief when he went to Ouagadougou to pay homage and allegiance to the Mogho Naba. But aside from these prescriptions, the chiefs of these subordinate districts administered their territories in the same manner as the Nobere chief administered his own.

The Mossi village chief had no administrators of his own to help him with day-to-day affairs of his village. However, like the district chief, he

11: Skinner E-5 (1955-1957) 1964
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and strangled in secret by the district police. If a district chief hesitated to punish a village chief whose followers had complained, the aggrieved lineage or the entire village simply took its movable property and left. This sanction does not seem to have been applied often, but its threat was normally sufficient to curb the excesses of the worst village chief.

found to have been justified—that is, if the victim was a thief or a nocturnal intruder—then the accused was acquitted or simply fined. If, however, the accused was found guilty of murder, he was sentenced to die, and the mode of execution was at the chief's pleasure. The chief surrendered the prisoner to his executioners, serfs who lived in the Baglere ward. They took him into the woods and carried out the sentence by strangulation, hanging, decapitation, clubbing, or stoning.

The perpetrator of an unusually heinous crime was often ordered to kill himself with a poisoned arrow. This form of execution was feared most, because it tested the murderer's mettle and called into play the coercive force of his lineage if he proved to be a coward. When such an execution was ordered, the district chief had a poisoned arrow prepared and brought to the murderer's father, his brother, or his father's brother's son. The relative gave the arrow to the condemned man, and, while apologizing for his painful mission, explained that the crime had to be expiated. If the murderer agreed to kill himself, his relatives prepared food and drink for him while his grave was dug. Some proud and brave men helped their relatives dig the oblong-shaped grave required for a murderer; some even insisted on digging it themselves. When both the food and the grave had been prepared, the murderer bade his relatives farewell, took the food and the poisoned arrow, and went into a hut. Here he ate the food and afterward killed himself by pushing the poisoned arrow into his leg. In some cases he had to be provided with a second arrow to hasten his death. If a cowardly murderer refused to kill himself, one of his relatives offered to die in his stead. He told the murderer that death was preferable to the knowledge that his lineage brother was a coward. What would happen, he asked the murderer, if he saw a relative being harmed? Would he choose his own safety rather than run the risk of death? The other relatives asked the same questions, and this subtle coercion was usually sufficient to induce the most cowardly man to kill himself. There are no reports of a murderer's permitting a relative to die for him; life would have been impossible for him afterward. One suspects that if ever a murderer had attempted to elude his fate, the district chief would have had him executed.

The district court also prescribed capital punishment for individuals convicted of arson, abduction, witchcraft, or lese majesty. A person convicted of willfully setting fire to someone's hut or crops was put to death even if no one was killed in the resulting fire; he was held to have jeopardized the life and livelihood of his victims. Similarly, the rare person convicted of threatening the well-being of others through the practice of witchcraft was usually tortured and killed. Conviction usually followed the testimony of witnesses or the confession of the accused.

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[P 107]

VII

THE ECONOMIC FOUNDATION

652 The revenue for the support of the Mossi chiefs and their governmental system came from many sources in a variety of forms. The Mossi of Ouagadougou held that "the Mogho Naba is master of everything" (*Mogh Nab n so fa*), and when they referred to the control he and his chiefs exercised over their goods and services, they said, "The commoner rears his livestock for the chief," and cited the proverb "The snake gets whatever is in the belly of the frog."

651 423 Since the Mossi were, and still are, primarily an agricultural people, the products of the soil were the main source of revenue. The Mossi chiefs did not own the land, but they controlled it and assigned land rights to their subjects. The Mossi believed that land had no value apart from people, and, conversely, that people could not exist without land. As they said, "Land is the mother; it fed the ancestors of this generation; it feeds the present generation and its children; and it provides the final resting place for all men." Therefore, a Mossi chief never hesitated to give anyone permission to use unoccupied land. It was in his interest to do so, because the more subjects he commanded, the greater were his revenue and prestige. An unpopular chief was censured not by a withholding of tribute and presents, but by a mass exodus of his subjects to another area.

643 651 796 Through the administrative hierarchy, the common people contributed to the support of the various levels of government. The Mogho Naba periodically received agricultural produce from all his subjects. Through the village chiefs, the village people sent part of their produce to the district chiefs, who forwarded it to the provincial ministers. They, in turn, delivered it to the central government during a ceremony appropriately called "Soretasgho" ("completion of the road"). This event occurred at the end of the harvest festival, after all the crops had been gathered in.[1]

To open the ceremony, the provincial governors' retainers began to clear the paths leading from the governors' compounds to the palace, for they had

11: Skinner E-5 (1955-1957) 1964
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ably been younger sons sent to rule in conquered territories claimed that their ancestors were direct descendants of Ouedraogo and Oubri. Thus, to the Mossi, the power to rule was intimately linked to closeness of descent from the royal ancestors. The supernatural power of these ancestors, and the vigilance they were believed to maintain over the affairs of their descendants, were regarded as important factors in Mossi government.

From the moment when the Mogho Naba of Ouagadougou or any other Mossi ruler "drank the namtibo" and thereby received the nam of his ancestors, he had the right—indeed, the duty—to offer sacrifices to these ancestors in the name of his subjects. Every night, throughout Mossi country, the Baloum Naba of every ruler performed an act of supplication (Kwaga Basgha) to the ancestors. He beseeched them to protect the subjects of their descendants through the night, to maintain peace in Mossi country, and to grant health, children, and prosperity to all Mossi. This nightly ceremony was climaxed yearly by an elaborate ritual in honor of the ancestors (called the Basgha in some areas, and the Pelegha, Filigha, or Kinkiriga in others) that began at the highest levels of the government and ultimately linked every Mossi chief and lineage head.

The Mogho Naba of Ouagadougou, like the other Mogho Nanamse and Dimdamba, initiated this ceremony in his own kingdom. His celebration, called "M'barengma," was held at the end of the Mossi agricultural year and after the Soretasgho. Thus, the M'barengma was a New Year's festival in thanksgiving for good crops, as well as the annual Feast of the Dead. A few weeks before the first moon of the new year (the *ki-basgha* or *ki-pelegha*), the Mogho Naba ordered his soghondamba and samande-kamba to clean up the palace buildings and courtyards—an activity intended to notify the ever-vigilant ancestors that preparations were being made to offer sacrifices in their honor. A short time later, the Mogho Naba gave grain from his fields to the Pughtiema so she could prepare millet water for the sacrifices. Present-day Mossi insist that part of the grain came from the first ears harvested that year and part from those of the previous year. This was supposed to symbolize the continuity between crops, mirroring the continuity between the ruler and his ancestors. A few days before the principal ceremony, the Mogho Naba ordered the Larhalle Naba to pour millet water and sacrifice chickens on the graves of former Mogho Nanamse.

Shortly before the ki-basgha moon appeared, the ruler had to leave his palace at night to elude the ancestors, who had been attracted by the preparations and who were expected to be angry when they discovered that the sacrifices were not yet ready. The unjust ruler feared ancestral sanctions; the just ruler that his ancestors might want him to join them. One night he

chief became ridiculously smaller when distributed among the producers; gone the tolls along the roads. Henceforth, all such services will be duly and individually compensated.

Even in the most remote and least accessible villages, people speak of liberty. The old women who go to the pools for water sit down for a moment near their jars in order to talk about it. Even bush fires spread less rapidly than this news.[27]

Very few Mossi in the rural areas were qualified to vote in the first post-war elections, and those who were qualified voted for the candidates preferred by the chiefs. However, as the franchise was progressively broadened after 1951, and many more Mossi and non-Mossi politicians traveled through the rural areas, the politicians favored by the chiefs found that they had to campaign to maintain their position. Both the chiefs and their politicians resented this. One visitor to the Upper Volta reports: "A highly educated Mossi of the Upper Volta told me, 'Citizenship has unsettled and ruined the people. Everyone has become his own master, and believes himself free to do whatever he wishes.'"[28] Opposition to the chiefs and their friends came from the Moslems, who supported their co-religionists for office, and from a growing group of young Mossi who resented the power of the chiefs. In 1955 one such group in Yatenga, composed of mission-educated youths, war veterans, and former workers, broke away from the Union Voltaïque and formed the Mouvement Démocratique Voltaïque (MDV) under the joint leadership of Gérard Ouédraogo and Michel Dorange, a Frenchman, who had been a captain in the colonial army. The partisans of the MDV often came into violent conflict with the supporters of the chiefs, but the organization itself was not banned by the administration, because its members included many veterans, and because Dorange was one of its leaders.

The appearance of the anti-chief MDV was symptomatic of the problems which the Mossi chiefs were to encounter as the people became free to elect their own representatives. For one thing, the people could now censure their chiefs by voting for their opponents, who appealed to them in terms of release from traditional prestations. But more important, even those Mossi politicians who were still friendly to the chiefs and depended on their support for election were becoming increasingly autonomous. The chiefs were operating in one power structure, the politicians in another and more important one. In Dakar, in Paris, and in the Palace of Versailles (where the Assembly of the French Union met) Mossi politicians dealt not only with local African problems but with problems the chiefs knew nothing about. As the politicians grew skillful at the game of metropolitan

12:Skinner E-4,5 (1955-1957) 1962
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and a bit peeved at not being able to put my idea into practice. I next sought the advice and consolation of an elder noble who listened quite calmly and then said: "The customs of these kafirs (heathens) are foolish." Being a Moslem, my friend was very often critical of the pagans, and could be relied upon to explain why their customs were "foolish." He said that in former days the Raga Naba would have climbed a tree and announced to the crowd any message from the district chief. Moreover, he was the custodian of all lost articles and restored them to their owners. The Moslem said that my request could not be granted because there was no Raga Naba, and that probably there would never be another. When the French first banned the institution, the local chief dismissed the Raga Naba. With the passage of years, however, the market became so dangerous that the chief tried to appoint another ex-serf to the job. This man soon died, and his successor died shortly after being appointed. Since that time the chief has made no attempt to name a new market chief.

With this new knowledge I called my aide and inquired from him whether this information was true and if so, why did he not tell me the true state of affairs. His reply was that he did not wish to say that the market was bad because the local people believed that they had solved the problem of the lack of a Raga Naba. When the last Raga Naba died, the chief decided not to name a new one, but in order to placate the market *tengkouga*, he ordered his *tengsoba* to make sacrifices to it. It was believed that these sacrifices would be acceptable as long as the officiant did not bear the title of Raga Naba. The other functions of the Raga Naba, such as collecting goods for the chief and preserving peace in the market, were taken over by the Kos Naba and another servant of the chief. However, the Kos Naba had to be careful lest he overstep his authority in such a way as would acquaint the *tengkouga* with the real situation. In my case, the chief was acting by trying to get the Kos Naba to acquaint the people with my loss in as inconspicuous a manner as possible. The consensus was that the Kos Naba would have risked his life had he made any kind of announcement to the market people, because the *tengkouga* would have thought that he was the new Raga Naba, and if not contented with the people would have killed him. Under these circumstances, I withdrew my request. I discovered later that my pen was not lost but had been in the hut all the time.

Those chiefs who have succeeded in retaining their market officials even secretly have been able to maintain their control over public behavior there. The Mossi are fairly law-abiding despite the persistence among them of a warrior tradition. Every man who goes to market, or anywhere for that matter, usually carries a baton over his

12:Skinner E-4,5 (1955-1957) 1962
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443 shoulder; but when he arrives in the market, he calmly places his
656 weapon on top of one of the sheds before he makes his rounds. The
626 women do not carry any weapons to market except their "words" but
411 even these are not often used because of the desire to avoid hostility—
[578] which the Mossi do not like to have disrupt one of their major institutions.

443 The rural market is the center of Mossi social life, and friends
671 as well as enemies meet within its confines. What Mangin wrote some forty years ago is still true: "Every self-respecting Mossi—man or woman, child or elder—must go to market at least once in a while, were it only to look . . . and to be looked at, if he can put on some
[797] handsome clothes" (Mangin 1921 : 53). Except for the Moslems who
[184] are now experimenting with a form of Purdah, there are few persons who do not go to market. The absence of someone from the market for more than two consecutive occasions is a sure sign of illness, travel, or family crisis. As one man said to me, "I must go to market, and when I get there I look for three persons: my girl friend, my debtor and my enemy. If I do now know whether any of them are at the market I am ill at ease. And when I go to the market and do not see them all, the market is not good."

443 The lively character of the Mossi market will be discussed later,
671 but throughout this kaleidoscope of activities certain consistencies
576 can be discerned. For example, one notices many different kinds of greetings and salutations in the market place, but each one of them correctly indicates the exact relation or relationship between the persons involved. Young girls on passing each other on one of their innumerable circuits of the market bend their knees slightly and place both of their cupped hands on their own breasts. Only then will they stop and exchange news. At the end of the conversation they repeat the same greeting and continue their rounds. Both girls and women greet casual male acquaintances in the same way, but
[512] invariably kneel if the male stops and talks to them. Women some-
[602] time kneel when speaking to each other, but always do so when addressing any male relative of a respected category, who may then send them on errands such as buying tobacco from the vendors. A man who meets a female benefactor, such as a woman who has given medi-
[562] cine to one of his children, invariably kneels down before her. She may do the same thing out of respect for his male status. However,
[601] when a man meets either his mother-in-law or his father's sister, he
[604] is the one to kneel down in order to greet her. Two men who are equals normally shake hands, but if not, the junior in status or in age kneels down before his elder or superior. Sometimes a high status man will prevent his greeter from kneeling by raising him. When